



Attorney's Do. No. 4430-18

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re application of: Andrew D. Barofsky & Kenton W. Gregory

Serial No.: 08/797,770

Art Unit: 3738

Confirmation No. 1692

Filed: February 7, 1997

Examiner: Paul Prebilio

For: METHOD FOR USING TROPOELASTIN
AND FOR PRODUCING TROPOELASTIN
BIOMATERIALS

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Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

TRANSMITTAL LETTER FOR APPELLANT'S BRIEF

Appeal is taken from the Examiner's Office Action mailed September 11, 2002,
rejecting claims 1-13, 15-24, 36-39, 41-55, 74, and 76-104 in this application.

This Appeal Brief is in furtherance of the Notice of Appeal mailed in this case on
November 5, 2002.

Enclosed herewith is PTO Form 2038 authorizing credit card payment for
\$160.00 for submission of Appeal Brief. Applicant believes that no further extension of
time is required, however if applicant has inadvertently overlooked the need for a petition
and fee for extension of time, the Commissioner is authorized to charge any fees due to
deposit account number 13-1703.

This Brief is transmitted in triplicate.

Respectfully submitted,



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APPELLANT'S BRIEF (37 CFR 1.192)

This brief contains these items under the following headings and in the order set forth below (37 CFR 1.192(c):

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION
II.	STATUS OF CLAIMS
III.	STATUS OF AMENDMENTS
IV.	SUMMARY OF INVENTION
V.	ISSUES
VI.	GROUPING OF CLAIMS
VII.	ARGUMENT
VIII.	APPENDIX

I. INTRODUCTION

This brief is in furtherance of the Notice of Appeal filed on November 5, 2002.

This is an appeal from the rejection, dated September 11, 2002, of claims 1-13, 15-24, 36-39, 41-55, 74 and 76-104 in the above-identified patent application.

The fee for filing this Appeal Brief in support of the appeal under 37 CFR 1.17(f) was previously sent on November 6, 2002.

The Appeal Brief is submitted in triplicate.

II. STATUS OF CLAIMS-37 CFR §1.192(c) (1)

A. Claims in the application are: 1-13, 15-24, 36-39, 41-55, 74 and 76-104.

B. Status of All the Claims:

1. Claims cancelled: NONE
2. Claims withdrawn from consideration but not cancelled: NONE
3. Claims pending: 1-13, 15-24, 36-39, 41-55, 74 and 76-104
4. Claims allowed: NONE
5. Claims rejected: 1-13, 15-24, 36-39, 41-55, 74 and 76-104

III. STATUS OF AMENDMENTS-37 CFR §1.192(c) (2)

All amendments that have been filed have been entered. In the rejection dated September 11, 2002, claims 1-13, 15, 21, 22, 24, 74, 76-90, and 95-100 have been provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 16-33 of co pending Application No. 09/000,604. Appellant believes that this issue should be handled outside this appeal.

IV. SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION-37 CFR §1.192(c) (3)

The subject invention of claim 1 is directed to a method for producing a biomaterial fused onto a tissue substrate. This method comprises providing a layer of the biomaterial consisting essentially of tropoelastin having a first and second outer major surface and a tissue substrate having a first and second outer major surface.

In claims 2-9, an energy absorbing material, which is energy absorptive within a predetermined range of light wavelengths, is applied to a selected one of the first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial in an amount which will cause fusing together of one of the first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and one of the first and second outer surfaces of the tissue substrate. The energy absorbing material penetrates into the interstices of the biomaterial. The energy absorbing material is then irradiated with light energy in the predetermined wavelength range with an intensity sufficient to fuse together one of the first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and the tissue substrate. This fuses together the selected one of the first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and the tissue substrate. Preferably, this method further includes the step of indirectly irradiating the energy absorbing material by directing the light energy first through the biomaterial or tissue substrate and then to the energy absorbing material. The energy absorbing material can comprise a biocompatible chromophore. It can also comprise an energy absorbing dye. The method can further include the step of substantially dissipating the energy absorbing material when the biomaterial and the tissue substrate are fused together. Moreover, it can further include the step of staining the first or second surface of the biomaterial with the energy absorbing material. Preferably, the step of applying the energy absorbing material to one of the outer surfaces of the biomaterial is done by doping a separate doped biomaterial layer with an energy absorbing material, and then fusing the separate doped biomaterial layer to the biomaterial. The energy-absorbing layer is preferably substantially uniformly applied to a selected one of the

first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial, more preferably covering substantially the entire outer surface of the biomaterial with the energy absorbing material.

Furthermore (claims 10-13), the step of irradiating the energy absorbing material can be accomplished with light energy at a localized temperature of from about 40 to 600 degrees C. for period of time sufficient to cause fusing together of one of the first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and one of the first and second outer surfaces of the tissue substrate. The tissue substrate can also be a live tissue substrate. The average thickness of the energy absorbing material, which penetrates into the interstices of the biomaterial, is preferably from about 0.5 to 300 microns. More specifically, the method can further include the step of arranging the magnitude of the wave length, energy level, absorption, and light intensity during irradiation with light energy of the energy absorbing material, and the concentration of the energy absorbing material, so that the localized temperature at the interface of the first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and the tissue substrate are maintained at from about 40 to 600°C., thereby fusing together the biomaterial and the tissue substrate.

The method (claims 15-21) can comprise a tissue substrate which is selected from a group consisting of bladders, intestines, tubes, esophagus, ureters, arteries, veins, stomachs, lungs, hearts, colons, and skin. It can further include the step of forming the biomaterial into a three-dimensional support structure wherein the biomaterial is combined with a stromal support matrix populated with actively growing stromal cells, preferably wherein the stromal support matrix comprises fibroblasts. It can also include the step of forming a cellular lining of human cells on one of the major surfaces of the biomaterial layer, preferably wherein the cells which are employed to form the cellular lining are at least one of endothelial cells, epithelial cells and urothelial cells. The method can also provide the step of forming an inner lining consisting essentially of tropoelastin for mechanical human structures to ensure their continued internal use in a human body, the inner lining preferably being formed in heart valves, heart implants, dialysis equipment, or oxygenator tubing for heart-lung by-pass systems. In an alternative step, a drug is introduced into the biomaterial.

Another method of this invention (see claim 23) can be provided for using a biomaterial as a tissue-fusible layer. That method comprises providing a layer of biomaterial consisting essentially of tropoelastin having a first and second outer major surface; providing a tissue substrate having a first and second outer major surface; and using the biomaterial as a heat fusible material by applying an energy absorbing material, which is energy absorptive within a predetermined range of light wavelengths, to one of the first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial in an amount which will make the biomaterial tissue-fusible, and which will cause fusing together of one of the first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and one of the first and second outer surfaces of the tissue substrate, the energy absorbing material being applied so that it will penetrate into the interstices of the biomaterial. Again, the energy absorbing material is irradiated with light energy in the predetermined wavelength range with an intensity being sufficient to fuse together one of the first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and the tissue substrate.

In a further method (see claim 24) for producing a biomaterial consisting essentially of tropoelastin is fused onto a tissue substrate. The method comprises providing a layer of the biomaterial having a first and second outer major surface and a tissue substrate having a first and second outer major surface, and applying an energy absorbing material, which is energy absorptive within a predetermined range of light wavelengths, to one of the first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial in an amount which will cause fusing together of one of the first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and one of the outer surface of the tissue substrate, the energy absorbing material penetrating into the interstices of the biomaterial. Next, the energy absorbing material is indirectly irradiated by directing the light energy first through the biomaterial or tissue substrate and then to the energy absorbing material so that the light energy is in the predetermined wavelength range with an intensity sufficient to fuse together one of the first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and the outer surface of the tissue substrate. Then, one of the first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and the outer surface of the tissue substrate is fused together and the

energy absorbing material is substantially dissipated when the biomaterial and the tissue substrate are fused together.

A method for producing a prosthetic device is described (claims 36-46) which comprises providing a biomaterial layer consisting essentially of tropoelastin and a support member comprising a stent, a conduit or a scaffold. The layer of biomaterial is applied to the support member to form the prosthetic device. Preferably, the layer of the biomaterial is applied so that it surrounds the support member. The biomaterial can preferably be formed by polymerization, or molded into a suitable size and shape, or formed into a sheet or tube, and then covering the support member with the sheet or tube. It can also be applied to the support by grafting, or by mechanical bonding, or by laser bonding. A drug can be incorporated into the biomaterial layer thereby decreasing the need for systemic intravenous or oral medications. The support member preferably comprises titanium, tantalum, stainless steel or nitinol.

A method for producing a biomaterial can also be provided (claim 47). The method comprises providing a polymerizable monomer consisting essentially of tropoelastin. Then, the polymerizable monomer is polymerized to form a polymer consisting essentially of tropoelastin, which in turn is formed into a biomaterial consisting essentially of tropoelastin. The preferred method (claims 51, 52 and 55) can include the step of forming a cellular lining of human cells and the introduction of drugs into the biomaterial, as set forth above. The biomaterial is preferably attached to a tissue substrate. Dependent claims 48-50, 53 and 54 are similar in scope to claims 15-17, 20 and 21.

A further method of this invention (claim 74) is for producing a biomaterial consisting essentially of tropoelastin joined to a tissue substrate. That method comprises providing a layer of the biomaterial consisting essentially of tropoelastin having a first and second outer major surface. Then, an energy absorbing material is applied to a selected one of the first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial. The energy absorbing material is energy absorptive within a predetermined range of light wavelengths in an amount which will cause fusing together of one

of the first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and an outer surface of the tissue substrate. The energy absorbing material penetrates into the interstices of the biomaterial. The selected one of the first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial is capable of joining together with the outer surface of the tissue substrate by irradiating the energy absorbing material with light energy in a predetermined wavelength range with an intensity sufficient to facilitate the joining together of the biomaterial and the tissue substrate.

In claim 76, an energy absorbing material is employed to fusing together the selected one of the first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and the tissue substrate. Claims 77-97 which are dependent from claim 76, are similar in scope to dependent claims 2-13 and 15-22, respectively.

In claim 98, a method for using a biomaterial consisting essentially of tropoelastin as a tissue-fusible layer is provided. This method comprises providing a layer of a biomaterial consisting essentially of tropoelastin having a first and second outer major surface, which is useable as a tissue-fusible material, and a tissue substrate having a first and second outer major surface. When an energy absorbing material, which is energy absorptive within a predetermined range of light wavelengths, is applied to one of the first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial in an amount which will make the biomaterial tissue-fusible, so that it will penetrate into the interstices of the biomaterial, it will cause fusing together of one of the first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and one of the first and second outer surfaces of the tissue substrate when the energy absorbing material is irradiated with light energy in the predetermined wavelength range with an intensity being sufficient to fuse together one of the first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and the tissue substrate.

In a method for producing an biomaterial fused onto a tissue substrate (claim 99), a biomaterial layer consisting essentially of tropoelastin having a first and second outer major surface and a tissue substrate having a first and second outer major surface is provided. An energy absorbing material is applied as described above. Then, the energy absorbing material is

indirectly irradiated by directing the light energy first through the biomaterial or tissue substrate and then to the energy absorbing material, the light energy being in the predetermined wavelength range with an intensity sufficient to fuse together one of the first and second outer surfaces of the cross linked biomaterial and the outer surface of the tissue substrate. In this way, the energy absorbing material is substantially dissipated when the cross linked biomaterial and the tissue substrates are fused together.

In claim 101 a method is provided for producing a biomaterial from a monomer consisting essentially of tropoelastin. The monomer is polymerized to form a polymer consisting essentially of tropoelastin, and the polymer is formed into a biocompatible biomaterial consisting essentially of tropoelastin. Then, a three-dimensional support structure is produced wherein the biomaterial is combined with a stromal support matrix populated with actively growing stromal cells. A method for producing a biomaterial is set forth in claim 103 which comprises providing a monomer consisting essentially of tropoelastin. The monomer is polymerized to form a polymer consisting essentially of tropoelastin, and a biomaterial is formed from the polymer. A cellular lining of human cells is formed on one of the major surfaces of the biomaterial. Dependent claim 102 and 104 are similar in scope to claims 17 and 19.

V. ISSUES ON APPEAL-37 CFR §1.192(c) (4)

A. First Issue: Whether claims 24, 36-39, 41-55, 74, 76-98, and 100-104 are unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

B. Second Issue: Whether claims 1-13, 15-24, 36-39, 41-55, 74 and 76-104 are unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as anticipated by WO 96/14807 to Gregory et al ("Gregory, et al").

C. Third Issue: Whether claims 1-13, 15-24, 36-39, 41-55, 74 and 76-104 are unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Gregory et al in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,428,014 to Labroo et al ("Labroo et al").

D. Fourth Issue: Whether claims 47 and 48 are unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Bedell-Hogan et al in the Journal of Biological Chemistry, page 1, lines 120-23 ("Bedell-Hogan et al").

E. Fifth Issue: Whether claims 47, 48 and 53-55 are unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by Labroo et al.

VI. GROUPING OF CLAIMS-37 CFR §1.192(c) (5)

Claims 24, 36-39, 41-55, 74, 76-98, and 100-104 present the same issues on appeal under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, and constitute one single group (Group 1).

Claims 1-13, 15-24, 36-39, 41-55, 74 and 76-104 present the same substantive issues on appeal under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (a) and constitute one single group (Group 2).

Claims 1-13, 15-24, 36-39, 41-55, 74 and 76-104 present the same substantive issues on appeal under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) and constitute one single group (Group 3).

Claims 47 and 48 present the same substantive issues on appeal under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and constitute one single group (Group 4).

Claims 47, 48 and 53-55 present the same substantive issues on appeal under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) and constitute one single group (Group 5).

VII. ARGUMENTS-37 CFR §1.192(c) (6)

A. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, of Group 1 Claims

Issue: Whether claims 24, 36-39, 41-55, 74, 76-98, and 100-104 can be rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. See Examiner's Action dated 9/11/02 (page 2). It is unclear why claims 1-13, 15-23, and 99 have not been rejected because these claims also contain the objectionable language "consisting essentially of".

The Examiner indicated that, for patentability purposes, he construed "consisting essentially of" in the claims as having the same meaning as "comprising". This construction is inappropriate upon a reviewing applicants' claims in light of the explicit prevailing law on the subject.

The transition language "consisting essentially of" has been held to render a claim open "only for the inclusion of unspecified ingredients which do not materially affect the basic and novel characteristics of the composition." Ex parte Davis, 80 USPQ 448, 450 (BPAI 1948); accord In re Herz, 190 USPQ 461, 463 (CCPA 1976); MPEP 2111.03. The Federal Circuit also has consistently recognized the meaning of "consisting essentially of", interpreting it to mean "exclude[ing] ingredients that would materially affect the basic and novel characteristics of the claimed composition". AFG Industries, Inc. v. Cardinal IG Co., 57 USPQ2d 1776, 1781 (Fed. Cir. 2001). The CAFC has left the claim "open to unlisted ingredients that do not materially affect the basic and novel properties of the invention." Id. at 1781.

Applicants contend that the transitional phrase "consisting essentially of" is not confusing and indefinite and is in fact acceptable in form. See MPEP 2111.03. A biomaterial consisting essentially of tropoelastin can be produced using a cross linking agent which is substantially dissipated during the formation of that biomaterial. Fibrin and polypeptides are not synonymous with tropoelastin and do not materially effect the structure of the biomaterial. Fibrin,

polypeptides and cross linking agents are clearly precluded by the language "consisting essentially of". The Examiner has offered no evidence to the contrary. The Examiner's position that fibrin, polypeptides and cross-linking agents are all material to the structure of the biomaterial is totally unsupported by any actual evidence. The Examiner's view that the transitional phase "consisting essentially of" should be interpreted as having the same scope as "comprising" is totally without foundation and substantive support.

The Examiner has attempted to justify his construction of the transitional phrase "consisting essentially of" based on the possible presence of cross linking agents and other materials which are employed in the formation of the tropoelastin biomaterial (fibrin and polypeptides are not reactants or products of the formation of tropoelastin) after the tropoelastin biomaterial is produced. The tropoelastin product does not include any reactant which remains after polymerization has been completed.

The Examiner has asserted that the biomaterial layer of the claimed invention is not "consisting essentially of" tropoelastin. He then erroneously defines "consisting essentially of" as meaning the same as "comprising". This strained argument is contrary to prevailing case law, as well as the MPEP, which makes clear that the transitional phase "consisting essentially of" actually defines the basic and novel characteristics of the claimed invention. See PPG, 48 USPQ2d at 1355.

The specification recites several properties of the invention, including that tropoelastin "undergoes very little post-developmental remodeling or breakdown and is a relatively permanent connective tissue structure during the life of an organism." (Application, p. 19, lns. 7-8.) Tropoelastin biomaterials are further said to not elicit a foreign body reaction, and to provide relatively permanent, natural support matrices for organ and tissue reconstruction. The longevity and integrity of implanted tropoelastin also is asserted to be regulated by the host rather than environmentally-induced hydrolysis or enzymatic degradation of prior art materials.

B. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102 of Group 2 Claims

Issue: Whether claims 1-13, 15-24, 36-39, 41-55, 74 and 76-100, and 103-104 are unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as anticipated by Gregory et al. See Examiner's Action dated 09/11/02 (pages 3 and 4).

This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Serial No. 08/341,881, filed November 15, 1994 ("USSN '881"), and a continuation-in-part of USSN 08/658,855 filed on May 31, 1996 ("USSN '855"). USSN '881 is the parent application of the Gregory et al reference cited by the Examiner.

Applicants' have enclosed herewith the Declaration under 37 C.F.R. 1.131 of Cheryl L. Maslen, Ph.D. ("Dr. Maslen") and of Kenton W. Gregory, M.D. ("Dr. Gregory"). The Declarations of Dr. Maslen and Dr. Gregory establish and confirm completion of the invention in this application, in the United States, at a date prior to May 23, 1996. May 23, 1996, is the effective date ("Effective Date"), with respect to the above-captioned patent application U.S. Serial No. 08/797,770 ("Application"), of the prior art publication WO 96/14807 to Gregory, et al.

More specifically, Dr. Maslen was, as of the date of execution of her Declaration, an Associate Professor, Molecular & Medical Genetics and Medicine at the Oregon Health & Sciences University ("OHSU") and also Associate Director of the OHSU Heart Research Center, both located in Portland, Oregon. Dr. Maslen conducted tropoelastin research at OHSU in collaboration with Kenton W. Gregory, M.D. and the Oregon Medical Laser Center ("OMLC") in Portland, Oregon. The tropoelastin research conducted in the OHSU laboratory of Dr. Maslen was funded entirely by Dr. Gregory at OMLC. Dr. Maslen clearly states that the work in her laboratory on tropoelastin began on or about September 1995, with the direct participation of Andrew Barofsky, a co-inventor in the above-referenced patent application, was undertaken by Mr. Barofsky, Dr. Maslen, and her laboratory personnel and students. The tropoelastin research, according to Dr. Maslen, was performed in her OHSU laboratory substantially continuously during the period of September 1996 to at least February 7, 1997. Furthermore, the tropoelastin

research had continued to the date of execution of Dr. Maslen's Declaration, and beyond, without having been halted or abandoned for other research projects, lack of funding or personnel, or other administrative or financial reasons. Dr. Maslen confirmed that Dr. Gregory has supervised the tropoelastin research in her laboratory since its inception in 1995, and that she has made regular progress reports to Dr. Gregory at OMLC regarding the tropoelastin research. Dr. Maslen's regular progress reports have been included in reports made by Dr. Gregory and OMLC to the research grant sponsor.

The Declaration of Dr. Gregory supports the statements in Dr. Maslen's Declaration. Dr. Gregory's Declaration states that collaborative research was undertaken in Dr. Cheryl Maslen's laboratory at the Oregon Health & Sciences University (OHSU). An initial aim of the collaboration was to develop a tropoelastin expression system to provide quantities of tropoelastin to the Oregon Medical Laser Center (OMLC) for supporting Dr. Gregory's research at that location. Dr. Gregory substantiates that the work in Dr. Maslen's laboratory on tropoelastin began on or about September 1995, with the direct participation of Andrew Barofsky, a co-inventor in the present patent application, that work having been undertaken by Mr. Barofsky, Dr. Maslen and Dr. Maslen's laboratory personnel and students. Dr. Gregory goes on to state that the tropoelastin research was performed in Dr. Maslen's OHSU laboratory substantially continuously during the period of September, 1996 to at least February 7, 1997 and, in fact, that this research has continued to date of execution of his Declaration. Dr. Gregory also verifies the fact that the tropoelastin research conducted in Dr. Maslen's OHSU laboratory was funded entirely by her research grant for tropoelastin. Finally, Dr. Gregory states that he has supervised the tropoelastin research in Dr. Maslen's laboratory since its inception in 1995, and that he has received regular progress reports from Dr. Maslen regarding this tropoelastin research. These regular progress reports from Dr. Maslen have been included in reports made by Dr. Gregory to the research sponsor.

A Declaration of Prior Invention in the United States to Overcome a Cited Publication under 37 C.F.R. 1.131 has also been presented to the Examiner. In that Declaration it is established that the invention of the pending claims was made at least by a date earlier than the effective date of the Gregory et al reference. The parties making the Declaration are Dr. Kenton Gregory and Mr. Andrew Barofsky, the co-inventors of the above referenced application. Dr. Gregory is also one of the co-inventors of the PCT publication which is in fact the Gregory et al reference.

The Examiner further stated that no evidence was submitted to establish diligence from May 23, 1996 to February 7, 1997. Applicants assert that the exhibits to the Gregory Declaration contain evidence showing both engineering diligence and attorney diligence in preparation of the patent application. The evidence comprises the following dated entries in lab journals of inventors, Andrew Barofsky (AB) and Dr. Kenton Gregory (KG):

- 5-23-96, AB book: under "Patent Ideas", remarks on "tropoelastin patent" (graft, stent covering, scaffolding uses);
- 5-28-96, KG book: "Patent work -- tropoelastin";
- 6-4-96, AB book: afternoon with JSM on "TPE patent";
- 6-24-96, KG book: notes "Patent Tropoelastin -- Andrew is working on";
- 7-11-96, AB book: states that "Jerry claims to have made progress adding stent stuff. . . should have a working final draft";
- 7-18-96, AB book: "TPE claims";
- 7-18-96, KG book: regarding "Tropo Patent", states that "Andrew to finish up on Marger most recent version";
- 10-15-96, AB book: "Jerry M. on vacation -- was going to work on final draft over weekend."; and
- 11-13-96, KG book: recites putting in "non-laser elastin applications claims" a list of things, including three "tropoelastin structure[s]" and several uses.

Before and during the critical period, the Attorney for Applicants believes that he was exposed to evidence demonstrating diligent effort in advancing the preparation of the present application, such as conversations regarding the invention, prior art and drafts of the claims and specification, and that therefore, Attorney for Applicants believes that conception occurred, and that attorney-diligence became relevant, on or about May 16, 1996 through to February 7, 1997. It is also believed that the Attorney for Applicants prepared the present application and was in contact with Applicants routinely from a date prior to May 23, 1996 to the present, and that Applicants disclosed to the Attorney for Applicants the subject matter of the present application on or before the publication of the Gregory (WO) reference.

C. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103 of Group 3 Claims

Issue: Whether claims 1-13, 15-24, 36-39, 41-55, 74 and 76-100, and 103-104 are unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Gregory et al in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,428,014 to Labroo et al. See Examiner's Action dated 09/11/02 (page 5).

Applicant's method claims 1-13, 15-24, 36-39, 41-55, 74 and 76-100, and 103-104 are described in Paragraph IV above. Gregory et al is an inapplicable reference for the reasons set forth in Paragraph VI. B. above.

Regarding Labroo et al, it is stated in column 4, lines 58-63, that the term "polymer" refers to a substance containing "two or more polypeptide monomers." The term "homopolymer" refers to polymers containing two or more "identical" polypeptide monomers. The term "copolymer" includes a polymer containing two or more "different" types of polypeptide monomers. In either the case of a homopolymer or a copolymer, as defined by Labroo et al, one or both of the polypeptide components must be a first polypeptide monomer which is a polypeptide monomer crosslinkable by transglutminase as described therein. In the case of a homopolymer, Labroo et al states that it is two or more of these first polypeptide monomers, and

in the case of the copolymer it is this first polypeptide monomer and a second different polypeptide monomer. Tropoelastin is not taught or suggested for use as a first polypeptide monomer by Labroo et al. Tropoelastin is defined, in the disclosure of Labroo et al cited by the Examiner in Col. 9, lines 1-26, as one of a class of materials useful as a second polypeptide monomer, only in copolymer compositions, and only in combination with a first polypeptide monomer which is not tropoelastin. Tropoelastin is never disclosed or suggested as being usable as either a first polypeptide monomer or as a homopolymer component.

Moreover, Labroo et al, states in column 4, lines 58-63, that the term "polymer" refers to a substance containing "two or more polypeptide monomers." The term "homopolymer" refers to polymers containing two or more "identical" polypeptide monomers. The term "copolymer" includes a polymer containing two or more "different" types of polypeptide monomers. In either the case of a homopolymer or a copolymer, as defined by Labroo et al, one or both of the polypeptide components must be a first polypeptide monomer which is a polypeptide monomer crosslinkable by transglutminase as described therein. In the case of a homopolymer, Labroo et al states that it is two or more of these first polypeptide monomers, and in the case of the copolymer it is this first polypeptide monomer and a second different polypeptide monomer.

Tropoelastin is not taught or suggested for use as a first polypeptide monomer by Labroo et al. Tropoelastin is defined, in the disclosure of Labroo et al cited by the Examiner in Col. 9, lines 1-26, as one of a class of materials useful as a second polypeptide monomer, only in copolymer compositions, and only in combination with a first polypeptide monomer which is not tropoelastin. Tropoelastin is never disclosed or suggested as being usable as either a first polypeptide monomer or as a homopolymer component. Labroo et al does not contemplate, suggest or teach the use of tropoelastin except as a second component of a copolymer the different first peptide monomers disclosed therein. Therefore, the requirements for anticipation have not been met by the Labroo reference with respect to the rejected claims.

The Examiner has introduced the concept of using tropoelastin per se as an "interchangeable" moiety with elastin, which is not specifically disclosed or taught by Labroo et al. This is pure speculation on the part of the Examiner which could have only been arrived at through hindsight reconstruction without any basis in the express teachings of Labroo et al (or Gregory et al even if it were available as a reference, which we posit it is not).

As stated above, Gregory et al is not a viable reference. Labroo et al does not contemplate, suggest or teach the use of tropoelastin except as a second component of a copolymer the different first peptide monomers disclosed therein. Therefore, the requirements for anticipation have not been met by the Labroo reference with respect to the rejected claims.

D. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102 of Group 4 Claims

Issue: Whether claims 47 and 48 are unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Bedell-Hogan et al in the Journal of Biological Chemistry, page 1, lines 120-23 ("Bedell-Hogan et al "). See Examiner's Action dated 09/11/02 (pages 5).

Claims 47 and 48 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b) as being anticipated by Bedell-Hogan et al. The method comprises providing a polymerizable monomer consisting essentially of tropoelastin. Then, the polymerizable monomer is polymerized to form a polymer consisting essentially of tropoelastin, which in turn is formed into a biomaterial consisting essentially of tropoelastin. In order to have anticipation under 35 USC Section 102 (b), every element of the claim must be found in the prior art reference. A method for producing a biomaterial can also be provided (claim 47). This is not described in the Bedell-Hogan et al reference.

Claim 48 is a method for producing an biomaterial fused onto a tissue substrate, a biomaterial layer consisting essentially of tropoelastin having a first and second outer major surface and a tissue substrate having a first and second outer major surface is provided. An

energy absorbing material is applied as described above. Then, the energy absorbing material is indirectly irradiated by directing the light energy first through the biomaterial or tissue substrate and then to the energy absorbing material, the light energy being in the predetermined wavelength range with an intensity sufficient to fuse together one of the first and second outer surfaces of the crosslinked biomaterial and the outer surface of the tissue substrate. In this way, the energy absorbing material is substantially dissipated when the crosslinked biomaterial and the tissue substrates are fused together. The tissue substrate is selected from a group consisting of bladders, intestines, tubes, esophagus, ureters, arteries, veins, stomachs, lungs, hearts, colons, and skin. This is not described in the Bedell-Hogan et al reference.

Therefore, the above rejection does not constitute prima facie anticipation under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b).

E. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102 of Group 5 Claims

Issue: Whether claims 47, 48 and 53-55 are unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by Labroo et al. See Examiner's Action dated 09/11/02 (page 5).

In order to have anticipation under 35 USC Section 102 (b), every element of the claim must be found in the prior art reference. As stated above, Labroo et al does not contemplate, suggest or teach the use of tropoelastin except as a second component of a copolymer the different first peptide monomers disclosed therein. Therefore, the requirements for anticipation have not been met by the Labroo reference with respect to the rejected claims.

Claims 47, 48, and 53-55 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Labroo et al. In amended claims 47, 48, and 53-55, applicant has added the language that the biomaterial employed is "consisting essentially of " tropoelastin. In order to have anticipation under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), each and every element of the claim must be found in

the prior art reference. Labroo et al does not contemplate, suggest or teach connection of the use of tropoelastin except as a copolymer with a first peptide monomers as disclosed therein.

Therefore, the requirements for anticipation have not been met with respect to those claims by the Labroo reference. As an aside, it is also applicants' view that amended claims 47, 48, and 53-55 are also not obvious with respect to Labroo et al reference for the reasons stated above.

VIII. APPENDIX 37 CFR§1.192(c) (7)

The text of the claims on appeal are claims 1-13, 15-24, 36-39, 41-55, 74 and 76-104, as follows:

1. A method for producing a biomaterial fused onto a tissue substrate comprising:
providing a layer of said biomaterial consisting essentially of tropoelastin having a first and second outer major surface and a tissue substrate having a first and second outer major surface; and
applying an energy absorbing material, which is energy absorptive within a predetermined range of light wavelengths, to a selected one of said first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial in an amount which will cause fusing together of one of said first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and one of said first and second outer surfaces of said tissue substrate, said energy absorbing material penetrating into the interstices of said biomaterial;
irradiating the energy absorbing material with light energy in said predetermined wavelength range with an intensity sufficient to fuse together one of said first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and the tissue substrate; and
fusing together the selected one of said first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and the tissue substrate.

2. The method of claim 1, which further includes the step of indirectly irradiating said energy absorbing material by directing the light energy first through the biomaterial or tissue substrate and then to the energy absorbing material.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein said energy absorbing material comprises a biocompatible chromophore.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein said energy absorbing material comprises an energy absorbing dye.

5. The method of claim 1, which further includes the step of substantially dissipating said energy absorbing material when said biomaterial and said tissue substrate are fused together.

6. The method of claim 1, which further includes the step of staining the first or second surface of said biomaterial with said energy absorbing material.

7. The method of claim 1, which further includes the step of applying said energy absorbing material to one of said outer surfaces of said biomaterial by doping a separate doped biomaterial layer with an energy absorbing material, and then fusing the separate doped biomaterial layer to the biomaterial.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the energy absorbing layer is substantially uniformly applied to a selected one of said first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial.

9. The method of claim 1, which further includes the step of covering substantially the entire outer surface of the biomaterial with the energy absorbing material.

10. The method of claim 1, which further includes the step of irradiating the energy absorbing material with light energy at a localized temperature of from about 40 to 600 degrees C. for period of time sufficient to cause fusing together of one of said first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and one of said first and second outer surfaces of said tissue substrate.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein the tissue substrate is a live tissue substrate.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the average thickness of the energy absorbing material which penetrates into the interstices of the biomaterial is from about 0.5 to 300 microns.

13. The method of claim 1, which further includes the step of arranging the magnitude of the wave length, energy level, absorption, and light intensity during irradiation with light energy of the energy absorbing material, and the concentration of the energy absorbing material, so that the localized temperature at the interface of said first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and the tissue substrate are maintained at from about 40 to 600 °C., thereby fusing together the biomaterial and the tissue substrate.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein the tissue substrate is selected from a group consisting of bladders, intestines, tubes, esophagus, ureters, arteries, veins, stomachs, lungs, hearts, colons, and skin.

16. The method of claim 1, which further includes the step of forming said biomaterial into a three-dimensional support structure wherein said biomaterial is combined with a stromal support matrix populated with actively growing stromal cells.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the stromal support matrix comprises fibroblasts.
18. The method of claim 1, which further includes the step of forming a cellular lining of human cells on one of the major surfaces of said biomaterial layer.
19. The method of claim 18, wherein said cells which are employed to form said cellular lining are at least one of endothelial cells, epithelial cells and urothelial cells.
20. The method of claim 1, which further includes the step of forming an inner lining consisting essentially of tropoelastin for mechanical human structures to ensure their continued internal use in a human body.
21. The method of claim 20, which further includes the step of forming said inner lining in heart valves, heart implants, dialysis equipment, or oxygenator tubing for heart-lung bypass systems.
22. The method of claim 1, which includes the step of introducing a drug into said biomaterial.
23. A method for using a biomaterial as a tissue-fusible layer, comprising:
providing a layer of biomaterial consisting essentially of tropoelastin having a first and second outer major surface;
providing a tissue substrate having a first and second outer major surface; and
using said biomaterial as a heat fusible material by applying an energy absorbing material,

which is energy absorptive within a predetermined range of light wavelengths, to one of said first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial in an amount which will make said biomaterial tissue-fusible, and which will cause fusing together of one of said first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and one of said first and second outer surfaces of said tissue substrate, said energy absorbing material being applied so that it will penetrate into the interstices of said biomaterial, irradiating the energy absorbing material with light energy in said predetermined wavelength range with an intensity being sufficient to fuse together one of said first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and the tissue substrate.

24. A method for producing a biomaterial consisting essentially of tropoelastin fused onto a tissue substrate comprising:

providing a layer of said biomaterial having a first and second outer major surface and a tissue substrate having a first and second outer major surface;

applying an energy absorbing material, which is energy absorptive within a predetermined range of light wavelengths, to one of said first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial in an amount which will cause fusing together of one of said first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and one of said outer surface of said tissue substrate, said energy absorbing material penetrating into the interstices of said biomaterial;

indirectly irradiating the energy absorbing material by directing the light energy first through the biomaterial or tissue substrate and then to the energy absorbing material, said light energy being in said predetermined wavelength range with an intensity sufficient to fuse together one of said first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and the outer surface of said tissue substrate; and

fusing together one of said first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and the outer surface of said tissue substrate and substantially dissipating said energy absorbing material when said biomaterial and said tissue substrate are fused together.

36. A method for producing a prosthetic device comprising:
providing a biomaterial layer consisting essentially of tropoelastin and a support member comprising a stent, a conduit or a scaffold; and
applying said layer of biomaterial to said support member to form said prosthetic device.

37. The method of claim 36, which includes the step of applying the layer of said biomaterial so that it surrounds said support member.

38. The method of claim 36, which includes the step of forming said biomaterial by polymerization.

39. The method of claim 36, which includes the step of molding said biomaterial of a suitable size and shape.

41. The method of claim 36, which includes the step of forming said biomaterial into a sheet or tube, and then covering said support member with said sheet or tube.

42. The method of claim 36, which includes the step of applying said biomaterial layer to said support by grafting.

43. The method of claim 36, which includes the step of applying said biomaterial layer to said support by mechanical bonding.

44. The method of claim 36, which includes the step of applying said biomaterial layer to said support by laser bonding.

45. The method of claim 36, which includes the step of incorporating a drug into said biomaterial layer thereby decreasing the need for systemic intravenous or oral medications.

46. The method of claim 36, wherein said support member comprises titanium, tantalum, stainless steel or nitinol.

47. A method for producing a biomaterial, which comprises:
providing a polymerizable monomer consisting essentially of tropoelastin;
polymerizing said polymerizable monomer to form a polymer consisting essentially of tropoelastin; and
forming a biomaterial consisting essentially of tropoelastin from said polymer.

48. The method of claim 100, wherein the tissue substrate is selected from a group consisting of bladders, intestines, tubes, esophagus, ureters, arteries, veins, stomachs, lungs, hearts, colons, and skin.

49. The method of claim 100, which further includes the step of forming a three-dimensional support structure wherein said biomaterial is combined with a stromal support matrix populated with actively growing stromal cells.

50. The method of claim 49, wherein the stromal support matrix comprises fibroblasts.

51. The method of claim 47, which further includes the step of forming a cellular lining of human cells on one of the major surfaces of said biomaterial.

52. The method of claim 51, wherein said human cells are selected from a group consisting of endothelial cells, epithelial cells and urothelial cells.

53. The method of claim 100, which further includes the step of forming an inner lining for mechanical human structures to ensure their continued internal use in a human body.

54. The method of claim 100, which further includes the step of forming an inner lining in heart valves, heart implants, dialysis equipment, or oxygenator tubing for heart-lung by-pass systems.

55. The method of claim 47, which includes the step of introducing a drug into said biomaterial.

74. A method for producing a biomaterial consisting essentially of tropoelastin joined to a tissue substrate comprising:

providing a layer of said biomaterial consisting essentially of tropoelastin having a first and second outer major surface; and

applying an energy absorbing material, which is energy absorptive within a predetermined range of light wavelengths, to a selected one of said first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial in an amount which will cause fusing together of one of said first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and an outer surface of said tissue substrate, said energy absorbing material penetrating into the interstices of said biomaterial,

the selected one of said first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial being capable of

joining together with the outer surface of the tissue substrate by irradiating the energy absorbing material with light energy in a predetermined wavelength range with an intensity sufficient to facilitate said joining together of said biomaterial and said tissue substrate.

76. A method for producing a biomaterial consisting essential of tropoelastin fused onto a tissue substrate comprising:

providing a layer of said biomaterial having a first and second outer major surface and a tissue substrate having a first and second outer major surface; and

applying an energy absorbing material, which is energy absorptive within a predetermined range of light wavelengths, to a selected one of said first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial in an amount which will cause fusing together of one of said first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and one of said first and second outer surfaces of said tissue substrate, said energy absorbing material penetrating into the interstices of said biomaterial;

irradiating the energy absorbing material with light energy in said predetermined wavelength range with an intensity sufficient to fuse together one of said first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and the tissue substrate; and

fusing together the selected one of said first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and the tissue substrate.

77. The method of claim 76, which further includes the step of indirectly irradiating said energy absorbing material by directing the light energy first through the biomaterial or tissue substrate and then to the energy absorbing material.

78. The method of claim 76, wherein said energy absorbing material comprises a biocompatible chromophore.

79. The method of claim 76, wherein said energy absorbing material comprises an energy absorbing dye.

80. The method of claim 76, which further includes the step of substantially dissipating said energy absorbing material when said biomaterial and said tissue substrate are fused together.

81. The method of claim 76, which further includes the step of staining the first or second surface of said biomaterial with said energy absorbing material.

82. The method of claim 76, which further includes the step of applying said energy absorbing material to one of said outer surfaces of said biomaterial by doping a separate biomaterial layer with an energy absorbing material, and then fusing the doped separate biomaterial layer to the biomaterial.

83. The method of claim 76, wherein the energy absorbing layer is substantially uniformly applied to a selected one of said first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial.

84. The method of claim 76, which further includes the step of covering substantially the entire outer surface of the biomaterial with the energy absorbing material.

85. The method of claim 76, which further includes the step of irradiating the energy absorbing material with light energy at a localized temperature of from about 40 to 600 degrees C. for period of time sufficient to cause fusing together of one of said first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and one of said first and second outer surfaces of said tissue substrate.

86. The method of claim 76, wherein the tissue substrate is a live tissue substrate.

87. The method of claim 76, wherein the average thickness of the energy absorbing material which penetrates into the interstices of the biomaterial is from about 0.5 to 300 microns.

88. The method of claim 76, which further includes the step of arranging the magnitude of the wave length, energy level, absorption, and light intensity during irradiation with light energy of the energy absorbing material, and the concentration of the energy absorbing material, so that the localized temperature at the interface of said first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and the tissue substrate are maintained at from about 40 to 600 °C., thereby fusing together the biomaterial and the tissue substrate.

89. The method of claim 76, wherein the tissue substrate is a live tissue substrate.

90. The method of claim 76, wherein the tissue substrate is selected from a group consisting of bladders, intestines, tubes, esophagus, ureters, arteries, veins, stomachs, lungs, hearts, colons, and skin.

91. The method of claim 76, which further includes the step of forming a three-dimensional support structure wherein said biomaterial is combined with a stromal support matrix populated with actively growing stromal cells.

92. The method of claim 91, wherein a stromal support matrix comprises fibroblasts.

93. The method of claim 76, which further includes the step of forming a cellular lining of human cells on one of the major surfaces of said biomaterial layer.

94. The method of claim 93, wherein said human cells are selected from a group consisting of endothelial cells, epithelial cells and urothelial cells.

95. The method of claim 76, which further includes the step of forming an inner lining of said biomaterial for mechanical human structures to ensure their continued internal use in a human body.

96. The method of claim 95, which further includes the step of forming said inner lining in heart valves, heart implants, dialysis equipment, or oxygenator tubing for heart-lung by-pass systems.

97. The method of claim 76, which includes the step of introducing a drug into said biomaterial.

98. A method for using a biomaterial consisting essentially of tropoelastin as a tissue-fusible layer, comprising:

providing a layer of a biomaterial consisting essentially of tropoelastin having a first and second outer major surface which is useable as a tissue-fusible material;

providing a tissue substrate having a first and second outer major surface; and

applying an energy absorbing material, which is energy absorptive within a predetermined range of light wavelengths, to one of said first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial in an amount which will make said biomaterial tissue-fusible, and which will cause fusing together of one of said first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and one of said first and second outer surfaces of said tissue substrate, said energy absorbing material being applied so that it will penetrate into the interstices of said biomaterial,

irradiating the energy absorbing material with light energy in said predetermined wavelength range with an intensity being sufficient to fuse together one of said first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and the tissue substrate.

99. A method for producing an biomaterial fused onto a tissue substrate comprising:
providing a biomaterial layer consisting essentially of tropoelastin having a first and second outer major surface and a tissue substrate having a first and second outer major surface;
applying an energy absorbing material, which is energy absorptive within a predetermined range of light wavelengths, to one of said first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial in an amount which will cause fusing together of one of said first and second outer surfaces of the biomaterial and one of said outer surface of said tissue substrate, said energy absorbing material penetrating into the interstices of said biomaterial;

indirectly irradiating the energy absorbing material by directing the light energy first through the biomaterial or tissue substrate and then to the energy absorbing material, said light energy being in said predetermined wavelength range with an intensity sufficient to fuse together one of said first and second outer surfaces of the crosslinked biomaterial and the outer surface of said tissue substrate; and

fusing together one of said first and second outer surfaces of the crosslinked biomaterial and the outer surface of said tissue substrate and substantially dissipating said energy absorbing material when said crosslinked biomaterial and said tissue substrate are fused together.

100. The method of claim 47, wherein said biomaterial is attached to a tissue substate.

101. A method for producing a biomaterial, which comprises:
providing a monomer consisting essentially of tropoelastin;
polymerizing said monomer to form a polymer consisting essentially of tropoelastin;

forming a biocompatible biomaterial consisting essentially of tropoelastin from said polymer; and

forming a three-dimensional support structure wherein said biomaterial is combined with a stromal support matrix populated with actively growing stromal cells.

102. The method of claim 101, wherein the stromal support matrix comprises fibroblasts.

103. A method for producing a biomaterial, which comprises:

providing a monomer consisting essentially of tropoelastin;

polymerizing said monomer to form a polymer consisting essentially of tropoelastin;

forming a biomaterial from said polymer; and

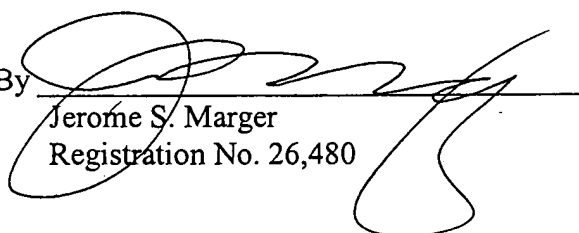
forming a cellular lining of human cells on one of the major surfaces of said biomaterial.

104. The method of claim 103, wherein said human cells are selected from a group consisting of endothelial cells, epithelial cells and urothelial cells.

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